

**Senator Tom Udall’s Legislative Actions to Address the COVID-19  
Pandemic**

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## Funding

### Federal Pandemic Response:

- ◆ Senator Udall voted to pass **H.R. 266**, a **\$484 billion** bipartisan COVID-19 response package with key funding for New Mexico and Indian Country, including:
  - Senator Udall and Senate Democrats fought to increase the amount of loans that small community lenders receive by **\$120 billion**, a key provision that will help finance the loans for many small businesses in New Mexico and Indian Country. More information on the community loans can be found [HERE](#).
  - An additional **\$75 billion** for hospitals and health care providers facing dire financial straits.
  - An additional **\$25 billion** for the mass testing efforts that will be needed to safely reopen social and economic activities with **\$11 billion** dedicated to go directly to states, localities and Tribes to boost testing and contact tracing capabilities. As vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Udall worked to ensure these testing funds include **\$750 million** specifically for Tribes.
    - **16** community health centers in New Mexico received **\$6,626,899** to expand COVID-19 testing capacity and procure medical supplies. The funding will be used to acquire additional personal protective equipment (PPE), train staff, purchase and administer coronavirus tests, and other essential lab services. More information on these grants can be found [HERE](#).
- ◆ Senator Udall voted to pass the ***Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act*** to provide immediate relief to New Mexicans grappling with the coronavirus pandemic. The **\$2 trillion** package includes key provisions to support New Mexico, including:
  - Direct payments of **\$1,200** to individual New Mexicans, **\$2,400** for married couples and **\$500** per child. More information on direct payments can be found [HERE](#).
  - A dramatic expansion of unemployment insurance to cover more New Mexicans and provide more benefits during this crisis. The extended unemployment insurance program increases the maximum unemployment benefit by **\$600** per week and ensures that laid-off workers, on average, will receive their full pay for **four months**. More information can be found [HERE](#).
  - Small business provisions that include **\$377 billion** in small business aid including up to **\$10 million** Payment Protection Program loans for small business up to 500 employees. The loans will be converted to grants so long as employers maintain their previous payroll through December 31, 2020. More information on the small business assistance legislation can be found [HERE](#).
  - Resources for Tribes and Native communities, notably an **\$8 billion** Tribal Government Relief fund to ensure Indian Tribes have direct "one stop" access to COVID-19 resources for economic recovery and continuation of essential government services based on local needs. The agreement also contains over **\$2 billion** in emergency supplemental funding for Indian Tribes, urban Indian health programs, and Native communities, including **\$1.032 billion** for the Indian Health Service. More information on the Tribal provisions that Udall fought for can be found [HERE](#). Information on Tribal resources in the bill can be found [HERE](#).

- Resources for hospitals and frontline health care workers, including more than **\$150 billion** for the health care system, and a “Marshall Plan for Hospitals” that injects major funding for hospitals and medical facilities. The bill injects **\$100 billion** into our hospitals and health system. More information on the “Marshall Plan” that Udall and Senate Democrats helped secure for New Mexico can be found [HERE](#).
  - An estimated 1,793 New Mexico health care providers will receive more than **\$170 million** to aid in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic as part of the first wave of the **\$100 billion** "Marshall Plan" program. More information on this funding can be found [HERE](#).
  - After the initial wave of “Marshall Plan” funding, **84** New Mexico health care providers received over **\$56 million** to aid in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic as part of the second tranche of federal funding, bringing the total New Mexico has received of these funds to date to **\$226,368,914**. More information on this funding can be found [HERE](#).
  - The "Marshall Plan" also set aside \$10 billion for rural health care providers. In New Mexico, 160 rural health care providers received over **\$114 million** in federal funding to aid in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and account for lost revenue that has stretched the resources of providers throughout the state and the country. Rural clinics and health centers will receive a minimum grant of **\$100,000**, with additional payment based on operating expenses. Rural acute care general hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals will receive a minimum level of support of no less than **\$1 million** with additional payment based on operating expenses. More information on the grants can be found [HERE](#).
- Senator Udall voted in favor of the **\$8.3 billion** supplemental coronavirus response package, which was signed into law on March 6, 2020. More information on the federal funding package can be found [HERE](#).
  - New Mexico has been allocated **\$6.4 million** in the funding package, and [has already received \\$500,000](#) of the total funds to bolster the state’s epidemiology and laboratory capacity.
  - More information on the *CARES Act* can be found [HERE](#).
- ◆ Senator Udall voted to pass the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020*, the second phase of coronavirus response funding and legislation. which provides free testing for anyone who needs it, emergency unemployment insurance, an expansion of paid sick leave, food security assistance, and expanded Medicaid funding. More information on the funding package can be found [HERE](#).
  - The Medicaid funding is estimated to provide an additional amount of **\$250 million** in federal Medicaid funding for New Mexico over a 12-month period. You can find more information on this funding [HERE](#).
  - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will distribute the additional **\$5.9 million** through the CDC Public Health Crisis Cooperative (CoAg).

## Resources for Tribes

- Local governments in New Mexico will receive a total of **\$133,196,781** and New Mexico Tribes will receive over **\$674,000** in emergency transit grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). The funds are part of a first wave of grants from the \$2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act that the entire New Mexico delegation voted to pass Congress. More information on the municipal grants can be found [HERE](#) and more information on the grants to New Mexico Tribes can be found [HERE](#).
- The Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo Tribal Council is receiving an award of **\$286,786** in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Rural and Tribal formula funds through the CARES Act for its on-demand transit system, the PoPay Messenger. The [PoPay Messenger](#), operated by Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo, covers over 12,000 square miles and serves 3,000 Tribal and over 11,500 non-Tribal Members of the community free of charge. The funds will be used for operating costs, to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and there is no local match required. More information on the grant can be found [HERE](#).
- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Wireline Competition Bureau sent **\$954,990** in a grant to the Navajo Nation Department of Health for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program authorized by the CARES Act. The funding will be used to provide home healthcare and remote monitoring services throughout Navajo Nation to patients who are isolated and under shelter-in-place orders, including low-income, elderly, vulnerable, and high-risk patients. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the vital importance of affordable broadband services to Tribal communities for health care, distance learning, and teleworking. More information on the grant can be found [HERE](#).
- The CDC, through the COVID-19 High-Impact Allocation Provider Relief Fund, has awarded **\$32.3 million** to the Gallup Indian Medical Center, Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services (RMCHHCS) Hospital, UNM Sandoval Regional Medical Center, and Shiprock-Northern Navajo Medical Center. The hospitals receiving payments through the provider relief fund, which was created under the CARES Act, will receive \$50,000 per each COVID-19 admission based on in-patient admissions from January 1 through June 10. Communities in Northwest New Mexico and the Navajo Nation were hit disproportionately hard at the beginning of the pandemic, and despite good progress against the disease, are still in need of resources. More information on the fund distribution can be found [HERE](#).
- The state has also received **\$1,175,940** from the Department of Health and Human Services for [emergency grants](#) to 16 community health centers, Pueblo health centers and Urban Indian Organizations on the front lines of New Mexico's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding to health centers across nine New Mexico counties will provide some immediate resources for health centers to respond to COVID-19 while continuing to support essential primary care services to underserved populations.

## Education

- Over **\$84 million** in grants will go to local education institutions, students, and the governor's office. **\$62 million** in funding is available through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEER) and **\$22 million** is available through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund, both authorized by the CARES Act. More information on the grants can be found [HERE](#).
- The New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) will receive **\$2.6 million** in federal funding to help provide online career and technical education (CTE) opportunities for high school students. NMPED will use the grant funding to develop the New Mexico Ready and

Equitable Career and Technical Education program, which will provide high school students with an online CTE curriculum. The curriculum will integrate regional workplace needs into the program's content to better prepare students to successfully enter the state's changing workforce. More information can be found [HERE](#).

- The New Mexico Department of Information Technology (DoIT) will receive a **\$1.5 million** award from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to the New Mexico Department of Information Technology (DoIT) to finance broadband connections in rural areas. DoIT will use the funds to provide technical assistance to local and Tribal governments in rural areas of the state to connect their communities to broadband. More information about this grant can be found [HERE](#).

## Economic Recovery

- Communities across the state received **over \$16.7 million** in emergency housing assistance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). New Mexico received the **\$16,776,942** in funding in three HUD programs, which include the Community Development Block Grant program, Emergency Solutions Grants and the Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) Program. These funds will help New Mexico keep more people in homes during serious economic disruption and public health crisis. More information can be found [HERE](#).
- Over **\$25 million** in emergency grants have been awarded to **50** local airports across New Mexico. The funds will sustain critical operations and connect the state and rural communities to the resources they need. The Albuquerque International Sunport will receive nearly **\$16.7 million**, Santa Fe Municipal Airport will receive over **\$1.858 million**, Lea County Regional Airport will receive over **\$1 million**, and the Roswell Air Center will receive over **\$1.2 million**. Over 45 additional airports around the state will receive amounts ranging from **\$20,000** to **\$69,000** each. More information on the grants can be found [HERE](#).
- Over **\$1,621,186** to public housing authorities in 14 counties across New Mexico for rental assistance for families, individuals, and owners amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant is funded by the \$850 million provided by the CARES Act for administrative and other expenses incurred by public housing authorities to implement key programs such as the Housing Choice Voucher program and Tenant Based Rental Assistance. More information on the grant can be found [HERE](#).
- Over **2,200** households in rural New Mexico will gain access to broadband internet after three utilities in the state received **\$23 million** in rural broadband grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The grants are part of the first wave of ReConnect funding increased by Congress in the CARES Act to improve broadband access for unserved and underserved areas across the country. The Pueblo of Acoma will receive a **\$942,955** grant, Peñasco Valley Telephone Cooperative Inc. will receive a **\$3.1 million** grant and Plateau will receive a **\$19.2 million** grant. The recipients will invest in broadband networks that will connect communities across 16 counties to broadband internet. More information on the grant can be found [HERE](#).
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has granted public housing authorities across the state more than **\$5.5 million** for Community Development Block Grants to increase access to affordable housing in New Mexico as the state responds to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds will help New Mexico keep more people in their homes during a time of significant economic disruption and public health crisis. More information on the grant can be found [HERE](#).

- The Economic Development Administration awarded a **\$500,000** grant to DreamSpring Community Development Association to assist with the rollout of the community development financial institution's Espresso loan program. The grant will help DreamSpring support loan recipients to create an anticipated **268** jobs in designated Opportunity Zones. More information on the grant can be found [HERE](#).
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded **\$15,455,067** to the state of New Mexico and the City of Albuquerque to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in communities with at-risk individuals and families who are homeless or receiving homelessness assistance. The funding is the second wave of HUD grants awarded from the CARES Act. More information on the grant can be found [HERE](#).
- The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has awarded **\$550,000** in grant funding to 11 organizations across New Mexico. The grants, part of the \$75 million for NEA appropriated through the CARES Act, will be used to support staff salaries, fees for artists or contractual personnel, and facilities costs. More information on the grants can be found [HERE](#).
- HUD awarded **\$2,138,253** to housing authorities across 15 New Mexico counties from the CARES Act funding in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding supports administrative and other expenses incurred by public housing authorities to implement key programs such as the Housing Choice Voucher program and Tenant Based Rental Assistance. More information on the grants can be found [HERE](#).
- The Department of Transportation awarded **\$1,956,693** in Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grants to 10 New Mexico airports from CARES Act funding. More information on the grants can be found [HERE](#).
- Carlsbad Industrial Action received **\$550,000** through the Economic Development Administration CARES Act Recovery Assistance grant program to provide Revolving Loan Funds to small businesses in Eddy county that have been impacted by COVID-19. More information on the grant can be found [HERE](#).
- The Department of Transportation further awarded **\$879,575** to **18** New Mexico airports. The funds will sustain critical operations and connect the state and rural communities to the resources they need. More information on the grant can be found [HERE](#).
- The New Mexico Economic Development Department will receive **\$1.5 million** to help develop a statewide coronavirus economic recovery plan. The funds are awarded from the U.S. Economic Development Agency's (EDA) Recovery Assistance grant program that the New Mexico delegation fought to establish in the CARES Act that Congress passed in March. More information can be found [HERE](#).

## Health Care

- New Mexico received over **\$77 million** for COVID-19 testing and contact tracing from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The funding arrives in the state as the New Mexico Department of Health is expanding testing statewide and free of charge for New Mexicans with 64 testing sites in each of the state's 33 counties. Significantly expanded testing to identify positive cases and tracing those individuals' contacts so that they can self-isolate is essential to stopping the spread of COVID-19 and enabling safe and sustainable reopening of the economy and social activities. More information on this grant can be found [HERE](#).
- Throughout New Mexico, **59** skilled nursing facilities will receive **\$20,537,500** to help combat the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds come from the \$175 billion



Provider Relief Fund established by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act. This funding will be used for nursing facilities' critical needs such as increasing staff, scaling up testing capacity, acquiring personal protective equipment and other expenses directly linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. More information on this grant can be found [HERE](#).

- Over **\$15 million** in emergency grants have been awarded to **16** community health centers, Pueblo health centers and Urban Indian Organizations on the front lines of New Mexico's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. More information on the grants can be found [HERE](#).
- Over **\$853,877** in grants to the University of New Mexico, the New Mexico Department of Health and the Southwest C.A.R.E. Center, for the Ryan White HIV/Aids Program as a part of the COVID-19 response. The Ryan White HIV/Aids program is a grant program funded through HHS to provide care and treatment for HIV and AIDS patients who lack health insurance or face financial barriers to accessing care. In 2018, the program served over 2,100 clients in New Mexico. More information on the grants can be found [HERE](#).
- A **\$2 million** grant for the New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) to fund behavioral health services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant to HSD will support the state's programs to treat individuals with mental health and substance abuse disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency [served over 149,000](#) New Mexicans in 2018 with federal funds. More information on the grant can be found [HERE](#).
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention awarded New Mexico **\$6,638,183** through the CARES Act for COVID-19 testing and contact tracing efforts. These measures are two critical public health activities that health experts say must be in place in order to safely reopen the state's economy. New Mexico has been aggressively expanded testing capacity and now has [64 test sites in all 33 counties](#) and was one of the first in the nation to begin testing asymptomatic essential workers. The state has also mobilized a team of nearly 100 public health workers who have spoken to more than 150,000 people as part of the state's contact tracing efforts to stem the spread of the disease.
- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has awarded **\$376,621** to the First Choice Community Healthcare (FCCH) South Valley Family Health Commons in Albuquerque through the COVID-19 Telehealth Program. The FCCH South Valley Family Health Commons plans to install network upgrades, telecommunications equipment, and telehealth and business software licenses that will allow for electronic patient registration, improved patient communication through a consolidated online platform, and the ability to provide video conferencing for patients and providers. More information on the grant can be found [HERE](#).
- The University of New Mexico (UNM) and Project ECHO will receive **\$237 million** from the Provider Relief Fund (PRF) to expand a pilot program in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to educate nursing homes about COVID-19 infection control. Project ECHO is a telementoring system created at UNM to improve health care in underserved communities by connecting local medical professionals with specialists for training to help provide the highest quality care. More information can be found [HERE](#).

## Legislation

### **Pandemic Assistance**

- ◆ Senator Udall joined U.S. Senator Tina Smith (D-Minn.) and a number of their Democratic Senate colleagues to introduce the ***Free COVID-19 Testing Act***, which would expand free tests to confirm coronavirus (COVID-19) infections. Private insurers would be barred from imposing limits like prior authorization for testing. For uninsured individuals, this legislation would cover the cost of lab fees, and states would have the option and new incentives to cover COVID-19 diagnostic testing and related health care services through their Medicaid programs. Further information can be found [HERE](#).
- ◆ Senator Udall cosponsored legislation to repeal a massive tax giveaway for a small group of ultra-wealthy taxpayers that Republicans included in the coronavirus relief bill. The legislation would do away with provisions in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act that the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) [estimates](#) will reduce government revenue by \$195 billion over ten years, and that would overwhelmingly benefit wealthy taxpayers like hedge fund managers and real estate speculators. The JCT calculates that the tax breaks for the ultra-wealthy will add \$195 billion to the national debt over the next 10 years at the cost of taxpayers. The Republican tax breaks are some of the costliest provisions of the CARES Act, despite providing no relief to the vast majority of New Mexicans and Americans, but they are likely to benefit 43,000 individuals who earn over \$1 million per year on average. More information can be found [HERE](#).
- ◆ Senator Udall joined the bipartisan ***Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act*** to help address the current physician shortages in rural and underserved communities in New Mexico and across the nation amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill would recapture a limited number of unused visas from prior years and allocate them to doctors and nurses who can help in the fight against COVID-19. The Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act would not increase current immigration numbers and also would not displace American workers. The Healthcare Resilience Act serves as a first step to ensure qualified physicians and nurses may serve to meet our nation's healthcare needs by authorizing 25,000 immigrant visas for professional nurses and 15,000 immigrant visas for physicians. The bill allows for recapture of unused immigrant visas under Section 106(d) of the American Competitiveness in the Twenty-first Century Act of 2000 in order to quell healthcare shortages that our country is currently facing especially in rural communities. More information can be found [HERE](#).
- ◆ Senator Udall and 33 Senate Democrats released a plan to dramatically expand access to health insurance for all Americans and cover all COVID-19 treatment costs amid the current pandemic. The senators outlined a [commonsense policy proposal](#) that would reduce costs for Affordable Care Act (ACA) health insurance marketplace plans and create a special enrollment period to obtain coverage, subsidize the high cost of COBRA plans for the newly unemployed, expand Medicaid national enrollment and protect American families with preexisting conditions from predatory “junk” insurance plans. Their proposal also calls on the Senate to immediately take up legislation to cover the cost of COVID-19 treatment for all, including the country's uninsured. More information can be found [HERE](#).
- ◆ Senator Udall introduced the ***Stopping COVID Scams Act of 2020***, to address the growing threat of COVID-19-related scams seeking to fleece American consumers. The legislation would empower the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and state attorneys general to better hold bad actors accountable for defrauding consumers during the current public health emergency. More information can be found [HERE](#).



- ◆ Senator Udall cosponsored legislation that would require major airlines and third-party ticket sellers to offer full cash refunds for all cancelled tickets during the coronavirus pandemic. The ***Cash Refunds for Coronavirus Cancellations Act of 2020***, which was introduced by Senators Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), and Kamala Harris (D-Calif.), would require refunds be provided regardless of whether the airline cancelled an entire flight or the passenger cancelled their individual ticket. A recent investigation further revealed that the airline industry could be holding onto over \$10 billion of hard-earned money from American travelers. More information can be found [HERE](#).

## Economic Recovery

- ◆ Senator Udall and Representative Debbie Dingell (D-MI) reintroduced the Care Corps Demonstration Act to build and strengthen America's caregiving workforce and help meet the growing demand for caregivers working with seniors and people living with disabilities. The Care Corps Demonstration Act will address the country's growing caregiving needs by placing volunteers in communities to provide vital assistance to help seniors and people with disabilities who need extra support to remain in their homes and live independently. For more information can be found [HERE](#).
- ◆ Senator Udall joined 15 senators in introducing legislation to significantly expand national service programs as the country works to respond and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The ***Pandemic Response and Opportunity Through National Service Act*** would fund 750,000 national service positions over a three-year response and recovery period, in part to meet the projected need for as many as 300,000 public health workers. The bill would also expand partnerships between AmeriCorps and federal health agencies, increase the AmeriCorps living allowance, and increase the total amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award given to corps members following a successful year of service, to ensure all Americans can step up to serve regardless of their financial circumstances. More information can be found [HERE](#).

## Indian Affairs

- ◆ Senator Udall joined Senate Democratic leadership to unveil the ***COVID-19 "Heroes Fund,"*** Senate Democrats' proposal to establish a pandemic premium pay to reward, retain, and recruit essential workers. Essential frontline workers in New Mexico, Indian Country, and across America are risking their own health to protect ours, to care for our loved ones, and to keep our communities safe and running. Senate Democrats' proposed "Heroes Fund" consists of a \$25,000 premium pay increase for essential workers—including Tribal workers—equivalent to a raise of \$13 per hour from the start of the public health emergency until December 31, 2020, and a \$15,000 essential worker recruitment incentive to attract and secure the workforce needed to fight the public health crisis. Importantly, this proposal will give Tribal frontline workers equal access to these benefits, and includes the necessary flexibility to meet the unique needs of Native communities. More information can be found [HERE](#).
- ◆ Senator Udall introduced a bill to ensure that Tribal healthcare systems have the same access to critical emergency funding resources as the rest of the country. The bill, ***CDC Tribal Public Health Security and Preparedness Act*** (S. 3486) This legislation would allow Tribes to apply directly to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) program and authorizes the CDC to make any necessary modifications to the program to fit the needs of Tribal applicants. The CDC PHEP grant program seeks to increase the capacity and response timeliness of local public health entities during public health emergencies. More information can be found [HERE](#).
- ◆ Senator Udall and Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) introduced the ***Tribal Medical Supplies Stockpile Access Act***, legislation that would guarantee that the Indian Health Service (IHS), Tribal health authorities, and urban Indian organizations have access to the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS),

a federal repository of drugs and medical supplies that can be tapped if a public health emergency could exhaust local supplies. Currently, IHS and Tribal health authorities' access to the SNS is very limited and is not guaranteed in the SNS statute. In contrast, states' and large municipalities' public health authorities have ready access to the SNS. The lawmakers' bill comes as the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) indicated that IHS is likely to face shortages of necessary equipment as coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) continues to spread. More information on the bill can be found [HERE](#).

- ◆ Senator Udall and Senator Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) introduced the ***Tribal COVID-19 Disaster Assistance Cost Share Relief Act***, legislation to eliminate the non-federal cost share for emergency protective measures undertaken by Tribal governments in response to the novel coronavirus. The cost share for public assistance under the Stafford Act is 75 percent for federal and 25 percent for non-federal entities. The Tribal COVID-19 Disaster Assistance Cost Share Relief Act would waive the cost-sharing requirement and grant 100 percent funding for all Indian Tribal governments. More information can be found [HERE](#).
- ◆ Senator Udall joined Senators Tina Smith (D-Minn.), James Lankford (R-Okla.) and Martha McSally (R-Ariz.) to introduce the bipartisan ***Coverage for Urban Indian Health Providers Act***, legislation to boost health resources for urban Indian health organizations (UIOs) as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The senators' legislation comes as UIOs across the country face major funding and staff shortfalls, in addition to shortages in medical equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). These hardships have forced three UIOs across the country to close their doors while pushing many other facilities to the brink. The Indian Health System is made up of the Indian Health Service, Tribal health programs, and UIOs. UIOs provide culturally competent care for the over 70 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives who live in urban centers. Currently, providers at UIOs are not offered the same malpractice liability protection as all other Indian Health Care Providers. More information can be found [HERE](#).

## Federal Oversight

- ◆ Senator Udall joined Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) to introduce the ***Natural Disaster and Emergency Ballot Act of 2020***, legislation that would ensure New Mexicans and all Americans are still able to vote safely by expanding early in-person voting and no-excuse absentee vote-by-mail to all states, and allowing voters who did not receive an absentee ballot to use a printable ballot currently only provided for military and overseas voters. The legislation comes following widespread confusion surrounding Ohio's primary this week, and following announcements by Louisiana and Georgia officials that they are postponing their April presidential primaries. Further information on the bill can be found [HERE](#).
- ◆ Senator Udall joined Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Chris Coons (D-Del.), and U.S. Representatives Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.) and John Sarbanes (D-Md.) to introduce the ***Coronavirus Oversight and Recovery Ethics (CORE) Act*** (S. 3855), legislation that would ensure stronger oversight, accountability, and transparency in the federal government's response to the COVID-19 crisis. The lawmakers are calling for the provisions of the CORE Act to be central to any future relief bill to ensure taxpayer dollars do not benefit interests of the wealthy or well-connected to the exclusion of the American people. More information can be found [HERE](#).

## Border Security

- ◆ Senator Udall led a bipartisan, bicameral group of lawmakers to introduce ***The Border Health Security Act of 2020*** (S. 3436). This legislation would strengthen national security and invest in the public health of border communities by updating and strengthening bilateral cooperation with Mexican and Canadian

public health organizations. The legislation also authorizes \$10.5 million per year in grant programs that address public health issues on the northern and southern borders for infectious disease testing, monitoring, and surveillance, health disparities, workforce training and development, and bioterrorism. Further information on the bill can be found [HERE](#).

## Education

- ◆ Senator Udall cosponsored the *Impact Aid Infrastructure Act* (IAIA), which provides \$1 billion in supplemental funding for school infrastructure grants through the Impact Aid program in school districts with high percentages of children with military parents or children living on Indian lands. With these grants, school districts would have the flexibility to focus on their specific renovation and repair needs, which could include changes to help protect the health, safety, and well-being of students, teachers, school leaders, and school personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic. More information can be found [HERE](#).
- ◆ Senator Udall and 45 Senate Democrats introduced the *Emergency Educational Connections Act*, legislation aimed at ensuring all K-12 students have adequate home internet connectivity and devices during the coronavirus pandemic. The legislation would provide **\$4 billion** in federal support for elementary and secondary schools and libraries, including Tribal schools and libraries, to provide Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers, and internet-enabled devices (as well as internet service through such equipment) to students, staff, and patrons; allow schools and libraries to continue to use the equipment after the emergency period; and ensure schools and libraries prioritize support for those most in need, following the guidelines of the E-Rate program. More information can be found [HERE](#).

# Executive Oversight and Accountability

## Health Care

1. Senator Udall joined 27 Senate Democrats in a letter to U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Alex Azar, urging him to reopen the Affordable Care Act's online marketplace to allow more Americans to get health insurance as they face potential health issues related to COVID-19. The senators urged HHS to allow Americans to enroll through a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) that should last throughout the pandemic to ensure comprehensive coverage for families and communities to protect themselves from COVID-19. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
2. Senator Udall also sent another request, with Senator Jack Reed (D-R.I.), to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services that the Trump Administration allow for a special enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act for those uninsured who contract COVID-19. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
3. Senator Udall joined 35 of their Senate colleagues to urge House and Senate leaders to ensure that any upcoming COVID-19 relief bill includes strong provisions to expand access to quality and affordable health care coverage in the wake of the coronavirus public health crisis. In their letter, the senators called for a bipartisan effort to increase the federal government spending on Medicaid to reduce the burden on state budgets as well as reduce premiums for individuals who are eligible for coverage in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) exchanges. New Mexico recently reported a Medicaid enrollment increase of approximately 10,000 individuals during the month of May for a total enrollment of nearly 900,000 people (close to 40% of the state's total population). More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
4. Senator Udall joined the entire Senate Democratic caucus in filing an amicus brief to preserve health care for millions of Americans in the case of *California v. Texas* (formerly *Texas v. Azar*). The case brought by several Republican Attorneys General and the Trump administration is currently pending before the Supreme Court and represents a direct threat to the Affordable Care Act and health care coverage for hundreds of millions of Americans. In the brief, the senators argue that the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate is constitutional, as the Supreme Court recognized in 2012, and that if the Supreme Court were to find the mandate unconstitutional, the remainder of the Affordable Care Act must remain intact. More information on the amicus brief can be found [HERE](#).

## Indian Affairs

5. Senator Udall led a bipartisan group of 27 senators to send an urgent letter to Vice President Mike Pence urging the Trump administration to mount a COVID-19 response that meaningfully engages with Native communities and Tribal leaders to ensure that Indian Country. You can view that letter [HERE](#).
6. Senator Udall led a bipartisan, bicameral group of 18 senators and 12 U.S. representatives in writing to President Donald J. Trump requesting that federal agencies implementing the Tribal provisions of the CARES Act do so in a manner that upholds the federal trust and treaty responsibilities to Indian Tribes, respects Tribal sovereignty and provides for meaningful government-to-government consultation with Indian Tribes. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).

Senator Udall followed this exchange with another letter alongside 47 colleagues, calling on the Trump administration to issue stimulus checks automatically to recipients of benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs or Social Security. In their letter, the senators pointed out that these are two groups with large amounts of non-filers and groups that the federal government has the necessary information to deliver the stimulus checks automatically. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).

7. Senator Udall and Senator Heinrich sent a letter to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Peter T. Gaynor outlining significant concerns about the public health and economic impacts that the COVID-19 outbreak is having on Tribal communities in New Mexico, and urged

Administrator Gaynor to take prompt action on all requests from Tribes for assistance and to increase the federal cost-share to 100 percent for all eligible emergency protective measures undertaken by tribal communities to protect Native communities from the COVID-19 pandemic. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).

8. Senator Udall, vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, formally requested official reviews by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for both the Department of the Treasury and the Department of the Interior into two concerns raised by Tribal governments in New Mexico and across the country related to the Trump administration's handling of COVID-19 relief funding for Tribes. In the past two weeks, numerous Tribal governments and organizations have raised concerns regarding a breach of sensitive Tribal data and a senior Trump administration official's potential conflict of interest in determining the federal distribution process for the CARES Act \$8 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#). The OIGs later confirmed to Udall that they were launching the investigations into these allegations. More information on this announcement can be found [HERE](#).
9. Senator Udall led 11 senators in a letter to U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin, requesting that the agency clarify the disbursement formula used to allocate payments to Tribal governments from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The senators echoed the concerns of many Tribes that the Treasury Department's reliance on Housing and Urban Development (HUD) population data without necessary consultation may result in an inaccurate or unfair distribution of funds, and that there have not been meaningful opportunities for Tribes to provide feedback to ensure accuracy. In the letter the senators ask Secretary Mnuchin to respond to their information request about the disbursement formula quickly to ensure that the disbursement methodology is fully transparent and that all Tribes receive adequate funds to protect the health and safety of their Tribal communities. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
10. Senator Udall led a letter signed by the entire New Mexico congressional delegation and by Senator Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.), Tom O'Halleran (D-Ariz.), Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.) to Director of the Indian Health Service Rear Admiral Michael Weahkee calling for answers from the agency following [troubling reports](#) that the federal agency purchased \$3 million of potentially substandard respirator masks from a company founded by a former White House deputy chief of staff and then distributed those masks without proper quality screening to Navajo Nation hospitals in New Mexico and Arizona. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
11. Senator Udall, as vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, and Patty Murray (D-Wash.), ranking member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, led 12 of their Democratic colleagues in a letter to David Bernhardt, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, and Betsy DeVos, U.S. Secretary of Education, regarding the impacts of COVID-19 on Bureau of Indian Education and Tribal college and university students. The letter asked Bernhardt and DeVos to explain how their Departments are addressing barriers to distance learning in Indian Country and to further explain the delay in distributing of CARES Act resources to Tribal schools, that has likely exacerbated disparities in educational opportunities for Native students. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
12. Senator Udall, as vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, led Senators Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.), Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), Gary Peters (D-Mich.), Tina Smith (D-Minn.), Tom Carper (D-Del.), Kamala Harris (D-Calif.), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.), and Jackie Rosen (D-Nev.) in a letter to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Peter Gaynor, requesting the agency provide guidance in concert with Indian Health Service (IHS) to Tribal governments regarding available disaster response resources and the process to request Public Assistance. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, Tribes have been unable to obtain clear guidance on services available to them for disaster assistance. In the letter, the senators note that Tribes across the country are still in dire need for disaster response resources as they continue to face high-levels of COVID-19 cases while Tribal governments are facing deep revenue shortfalls for the foreseeable future. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).



13. Senator Udall joined a group of 41 Senate Democrats calling on Senate leadership to include at least \$175 billion for the Elementary and Secondary Education Relief Fund in any future coronavirus relief package. New Mexico's K-12 public and Tribal schools – many of which are already facing severe budget cuts – desperately need these resources to adequately protect students, teachers, staff, families, and the community from the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in the coming academic year. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
14. Senator Udall and Senator Patty Murray (D-Wash.) led a bipartisan, bicameral group of lawmakers to call on the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to clarify their policies and practices regarding Tribal epidemiology centers' (TECs) access to disease surveillance data, including data necessary to inform Native communities' response to the COVID-19 pandemic. TECs perform vital public health surveillance work and assistance in consultation with and on the request of the Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and Urban Indian Health Programs. Under federal law, TECs are designated as public health authorities that should have full access to HHS and CDC public health surveillance data. However, the HHS and CDC have not granted TECs access to these data. Without access to critical information that the CDC collects, TECs cannot effectively do the work needed manage COVID-19 outbreaks across Indian Country. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
15. Senator Udall joined U.S. Senator John Hoeven (R-N.D.), chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, to convene an oversight and legislative hearing on the federal government's response to COVID-19 in Native communities. During the hearing's first panel, Udall pressed Indian Health Service (IHS) Director Michael Weahkee to explain the circumstances under which IHS entered into a \$3 million federal contract to procure one million KN95 respirator masks – thousands of which were determined to be substandard and not for medical use – for IHS hospitals serving the Navajo Nation in New Mexico and Arizona. More information on the hearing can be found [HERE](#).
16. During a Senate Committee on Indian Affairs oversight hearing on July 30, Senator Udall grilled Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) Director Tony Dearman about the Bureau's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Udall described the Trump administration's efforts as "woefully inadequate at best and dangerously irresponsible at worst." More information on the hearing can be found [HERE](#).
17. Senator Udall issued a statement following reports BIE plans to resume in-person instruction at all federally-operated BIE schools in September regardless of Tribal preferences or public health guidance. A full copy of the statement can be found [HERE](#).
18. Senator Udall joined 18 Senate Democrats in urging the U.S. Department of Commerce and U.S. Census Bureau to honor their previously announced 2020 census completion date to ensure an accurate count for Indian Country and the Native Hawaiian community. On August 3rd, the Bureau reneged on its April 13th announcement and indicated instead that it will cease all collection by September 30, 2020. Census response rates have been and remain low in Tribal communities in part because Tribal governments have taken necessary measures to keep their communities safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, as Tribal communities have experienced some of the highest mortality rates in the nation from the virus. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
19. Senator Udall, in his capacity as vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, led a letter with, Senators John Hoeven (R-N.D.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), encouraging Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board Jerome Powell to increase access to lending programs created under the CARES Act for Tribal governments as they face increasing economic strain from the COVID-19 pandemic. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
20. Senator Udall joined Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM) to issue a statement after U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary David Bernhardt announced the agency would refuse to extend public comment period on a resource management plan surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park while the Tribes and local communities most affected by the plan continue to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic. More information on this statement can be found [HERE](#).



## COVID-19 Worker Assistance and Protections

21. Senator Udall joined all Senate Democrats in a letter urging the Trump administration to prioritize American workers for his response to COVID-19 over the bottom lines of big corporations. He is urging the White House to adopt practices that will benefit workers such as paid sick leave, food security, and supporting anti-price gouging protections. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
22. Senator Udall also joined Senate colleagues to ask for information about how the Trump administration is issuing guidance to protect populations particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. In the letter, the senators are asking Trump administration public health officials to protect nursing home residents, families, and workers from the spread of COVID-19. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
23. Senator Udall joined Senator Mark Warner (D-Va.) in a letter urging the Administration to consider adopting practices that will benefit workers such as paid sick leave, food security, and supporting anti-price gouging protections. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
24. Senator Udall signed a letter with 26 fellow senators urging President Trump to immediately issue an executive order directing agencies to utilize telework capabilities to the maximum extent possible for federal workers. After the senators' letter was sent on Monday, the Trump administration issued [further directions](#) to federal agencies to expand telework to federal offices outside the D.C. region. With its important federal facilities and significant public lands, there are over [21,900](#) federal civilian employees in New Mexico, according to the White House Office of Personnel Management. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
25. Senator Udall and 17 other Democrats sent a letter to Senate leadership outlining an important new proposal to provide Americans with [\\$2,000](#) in direct cash payments as the economic fallout from the novel coronavirus outbreak continues to escalate. In the letter, the senators outline a proposal to provide a \$2,000 immediate cash payment to every adult, child (or non-child dependent), and recipient of Social Security, Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The proposal calls for additional cash payments should the public health crisis extend, or if the unemployment rate increases. The payments would phase-out for higher-income taxpayers. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
26. Senator Udall and the entire New Mexico congressional delegation sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services leadership requesting the release the state of New Mexico's full allotment of personal protective equipment (PPE), such as protective gloves and masks, for health care providers responding to the novel Coronavirus emergency. Currently, the state of New Mexico has received 25 percent of its full allotment of PPE from the Strategic National Stockpile, a federal repository of drugs and medical supplies that can be tapped if a public health emergency could exhaust local supplies. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
27. Senator Udall joined all eight Democrats on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo requesting Pompeo immediately present a plan to Congress on the U.S. Department of State's efforts to assist Americans abroad seeking to return home. Senate offices have received a substantial increase in calls for help from constituents and concerned families who have reported they are unable to secure flights home to the U.S., and in some cases, have had difficulty contacting U.S. Embassies and consulates. Udall and the New Mexico congressional delegation also released a statement and followed the statement with a formal letter calling on Pompeo to act swiftly to assist constituents abroad. The Senate Democrats' letter can be viewed [HERE](#), the New Mexico delegation's statement can be viewed [HERE](#) and the New Mexico delegation's letter [HERE](#).

28. Senator Udall joined Senator Chris Murphy and 14 Senate Democrats in a letter to the CEOs of the seven largest health insurance companies calling on them to cover all COVID-19 related treatment and services without cost-sharing requirements and allowing Americans to get tested, assessed and treated without the fear of unexpected medical bills and remove economic barriers from addressing the current public health crisis. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
29. Senator Udall joined Senators Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) and Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) along with 17 of their colleagues in condemning President Trump's partial invocation of the Defense Production Act (DPA), calling on President Trump to immediately implement all Defense Production Act powers to massively scale up production of testing kits, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) such as respirators and gloves, ventilators, and other critical materials that our country needs during the coronavirus emergency. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) estimates the United States could need up to 3.5 billion respirators during the coronavirus emergency, but the Strategic National Stockpile holds only 12 million respirators. Congress amended DPA in 2009 to explicitly extend those authorities to support domestic preparedness and response to national emergencies, such as the coronavirus pandemic. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#). Udall also joined every member of the Senate Democratic Caucus in a letter to the president and vice president demanding answers about medical supplies and equipment in the Strategic National Stockpile, critical to addressing the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
30. Senator Udall and 33 Democratic colleagues sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Eugene Scalia, pressing the department to ensure that workers Congress intended to be covered by the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program under the CARES Act receive the benefits they deserve. The senators are requesting the Department of Labor clarify its guidance pertaining to workers who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 without receiving a test, workers with COVID-19 who take time off of work, workers without child care options in summer months, workers unable to get to work due to stay-at-home orders, workers with underlying health conditions like asthma, and self-employed workers like gig workers who are unable to work due to plummeting demand for their services. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
31. Senator Udall and the entire New Mexico congressional delegation sent a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Defense and the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to support Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's request to deploy a fully equipped Combat Support Hospital to Albuquerque, New Mexico and mobilize additional military hospital resources to New Mexico communities under strain to meet the surge in new COVID-19 patients. Despite the state and local public health officials' proactive measures to reduce community spread of COVID-19, New Mexico is particularly vulnerable to a surge in COVID-19 patients due to the state's limited hospital capacity and rural distribution of the state's population. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
32. Senator Udall joined 16 Senate Democratic colleagues in a letter to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) urging the agency to protect consumers from price gouging during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the letter, the senators call on the agency to use the full extent of its authority to prevent abusive price gouging on consumer health products—like disinfectant spray and hand sanitizer—that members of the public need to protect themselves and their loved ones from the spread of the novel coronavirus. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
33. Senator Udall joined 42 senators in a letter calling for the U.S. Treasury Department and Social Security Administration to ensure that all Social Security beneficiaries will automatically receive the direct assistance included in the CARES Act without having to file tax returns. Udall and his colleagues expressed alarm to the Treasury Department that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) released contradictory guidance earlier this week stating that Social Security beneficiaries would need to file tax returns in order to receive direct payments. This guidance contradicts clear direction from the CARES Act that the president signed into law last week ensuring that the Treasury Department had the authority to send automatic direct cash assistance to Social Security beneficiaries regardless of whether they file taxes or not. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).

Following calls from Udall and other senators, the U.S. Treasury Department announced that Social Security recipients will automatically receive direct cash assistance included in the CARES Act without having to file tax returns. More information can be found [HERE](#).

34. Senator Udall and a bipartisan group of 39 senators sent a letter calling on Senate leadership to include strong support for victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in future legislation to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The senators highlighted a deeply concerning trend that service providers are reporting, in which many local law enforcement agencies are receiving an increased number of domestic violence-related calls, abusers are using COVID-19 to isolate their victims; withhold financial resources; refuse medical aid; and rape crisis centers are seeing increased need for services. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
35. Senator Udall and 33 Democratic colleagues sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Eugene Scalia, pressing the department to ensure that workers Congress intended to be covered by the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program under the CARES Act receive the benefits they deserve. The senators are requesting the Department of Labor clarify its guidance pertaining to workers who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 without receiving a test, workers with COVID-19 who take time off of work, workers without child care options in summer months, workers unable to get to work due to stay-at-home orders, workers with underlying health conditions like asthma, and self-employed workers like gig workers who are unable to work due to plummeting demand for their services. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
36. Senator Udall joined nine of his colleagues in a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s Offices of the Inspector General calling for investigations into the Trump administration's COVID-19 response, including whether political expediency rather than the country's urgent public health needs has driven the Trump administration's distribution of life-saving medical supplies and equipment. New Mexico, along with other states, is facing a Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) shortage, forcing some hospital staff and essential workers to reuse and ration masks and other protective gear. Hospitals are working in conjunction with the state of New Mexico to obtain more PPE to keep frontline health workers safe, but without a cohesive and transparent national strategy, some hospitals are running low – meaning some frontline health care workers are not receiving the equipment they need and would have under normal circumstances. [New Mexico In Depth](#) reports that at least 20 hospital employees in New Mexico have tested positive for COVID-19. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
37. Senator Udall joined a bipartisan group of 25 other senators on a bipartisan letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), calling for the Senate to provide much-needed budgetary certainty for rural communities to ensure long-term funding needed for essential services during the COVID-19 crisis. The senators pushed for a long-term solution for the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) and Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) programs at the next possible opportunity. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
38. Senator Udall along with a group of 43 Senators, are calling on the Treasury Department to ensure that families who are not required to file taxes and will automatically receive their COVID-19 stimulus payment do not need to wait until next year to receive the additional \$500 payment per dependent child that they were promised. The letter follows the Treasury's announcement on Monday that families on Social Security who do not file tax returns needed to enter additional information on the IRS website within 48 hours in order to receive the \$500 payment per dependent child that they are entitled to, and that if they missed the deadline, they would not receive the additional payment until 2021. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
39. Senator Udall, with a group of 143 lawmakers from the House and Senate, requested Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Ajit Pai to actively notify the millions of Americans who are eligible for discount telephone or broadband access from the FCC's Lifeline program. In the bicameral letter, the Members of Congress urged Chairman Pai to ensure that the millions of Americans who are now eligible for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) or Medicaid are

informed that they are also eligible for the FCC's Lifeline program. Following the emergency extension of Medicaid and supplemental nutrition assistance programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, over 1.4 million New Mexicans are [eligible for these expanded benefits](#) and broadband connection under the Lifeline program. The FCC's Lifeline [program](#) typically provides a \$9.25 monthly discount on eligible wireline or wireless service, including broadband. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).

40. Senator Udall joined 25 colleagues in a letter to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) calling on the Trump administration to issue comprehensive guidance on safety measures to keep voters, poll workers, and election workers safe during upcoming elections, both for mail voting and in-person voting. New Mexico's primary elections are scheduled for June 2, 2020. To increase awareness of voting options, the New Mexico Secretary of State has sent absentee ballot applications to every New Mexico voter eligible to vote in the state's primaries in order to facilitate a safe election and protect voters and poll workers voting methods amidst the pandemic. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
41. Senator Udall joined a group of 31 senators in urging Senate leadership to include \$47 billion in financial support for students and institutions of higher learning in the upcoming coronavirus relief package. In a letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), the senators called for additional funding to ensure that students are able to complete their degrees despite the impact of COVID-19. The senators also emphasized the substantial costs and losses already faced by institutions of higher education as enrollment declines and state cuts jeopardize the financial stability of schools. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
42. Senator Udall joined 23 senators to push the Trump administration for greater federal resources and guidance to support nursing homes and long-term care (LTC) facilities throughout the country as they combat the COVID-19 outbreak. Over 9,600 nursing homes and LTC facilities across the U.S. have reported COVID-19 cases and more than 40,000 residents and workers in LTC settings have died from the virus. In New Mexico, [more than 40%](#) of COVID-19 related deaths have occurred in nursing homes and long-term care facilities—approximately 2 out of 5 deaths since New Mexico reported its first coronavirus case on March 11, 2020. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
43. Senator Udall joined a bicameral group of 18 Democratic lawmakers in sending a letter to Senate leadership asking for increased funding dedicated to supporting the unique needs of the children of migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic as a part of the next congressional relief package. More than 300,000 children relocate throughout the country with their families who are seeking seasonal agricultural work multiple times throughout the year. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
44. Senator Udall joined 33 senators in a letter to the Trump administration, urging them to restore full funding to states like New Mexico in order to maintain critical National Guard unit services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The president reduced Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement for National Guard units from 100 percent to 75 percent. The president's order removes key federal support for New Mexico's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the midst of a national spike in cases and economic crisis gutting state and local government budgets. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).

## Veterans Affairs

45. Senator Udall joined Senator Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and the Democratic members of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee in a letter to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) requesting information on the VA's preparedness to treat veterans throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency, in addition to the VA's "Fourth Mission" to support the national health care system in a national emergency. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).

## Economic Recovery

46. Senator Udall and five Senate Democrats sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) calling for a **\$4 billion** economic relief package to America's creative economy, which is at severe risk because of the COVID-19. The senators are urging Senate leadership to use the NEA as the critical government grant-making organization to sustain the creative economy by disbursing the funds to artists and artisans across the country and ensuring that artists and artisans are eligible for further economic stimulus measures from government agencies such as the Small Business Administration and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
47. Senator Udall joined 42 senators and 82 representatives in sending a bipartisan letter to U.S. Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Alex Azar urging him to direct funding included in the recently passed CARES Act to sustain small and rural hospitals. The CARES Act created a \$100 billion grant program for hospitals and other health care providers combatting the coronavirus pandemic. According to the New Mexico Hospital Association, 33 of their 46 members serve primarily rural areas. Ten hospitals in the state were designated as Critical Access Hospitals by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in FY2019. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
48. Senator Udall joined two bipartisan, bicameral letters seeking clarity on unemployment benefits and work opportunities for Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, and other national service participants who have returned to the United States amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The lawmakers requested Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor Eugene Scalia to confirm the eligibility—intended by Congress in the recently-passed CARES Act—of AmeriCorps and Peace Corps volunteers to apply for unemployment assistance. The lawmakers further addressed a letter to leadership at the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, and FEMA urging the agencies to provide returned Peace Corps volunteers with the opportunity to enlist in domestic COVID-19 response efforts. More information on both letters can be found [HERE](#).
49. Senator Udall joined 19 senators to call for financial relief for local journalism and media outlets, which are facing severe economic hardship, in any future COVID-19 relief package. In a letter to Senate leadership, the senators warn that the widespread impact of the COVID-19 pandemic – including plummeting advertising revenue – could decimate regional and local news outlets even as communities depend on the reporting amidst the public health crisis. Many New Mexico local media outlets have been forced to lay off staff, cut hours and pay, and limit publications and operations due to a drop in commercial advertising revenue. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
50. Senator Udall joined a bipartisan group of senators in urging the Trump administration to provide relief for local farmers who are struggling as the nation combats the spread of COVID-19. In a letter sent to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Sonny Perdue, the senators urged USDA to ensure that a portion of the \$9.5 billion they secured in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, goes to local farmers who sell directly to consumers, schools, institutions, farmers markets and restaurants, many of whom have lost sales due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related closures. According to USDA, New Mexico families run approximately 23,800 farms, spanning 43.9 million acres of farmland across the state, for a total economic impact of \$2.5 billion per year. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
51. Senator Udall and joined 37 fellow senators sent a letter to Senate and House Republican leadership, requesting that any future emergency coronavirus legislation include strong provisions that protect and expand healthcare coverage for the millions of Americans and record number of New Mexicans who have filed for unemployment and recently lost employer-based healthcare coverage. In the letter, the senators urged congressional leadership to expand access to Medicaid, Affordable Care Act marketplace plans and provide financial assistance to the newly unemployed to help them maintain short term coverage through their employer plan. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).



52. Senator Udall and a bipartisan group of 78 Senators, sent a letter to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Acting Director Russell Vought to support local radio and television broadcasters and local newspapers during the COVID-19 pandemic by working with agencies to increase federal advertising in community news outlets, particularly in rural areas. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
53. Senator Udall joined 40 senators in a letter to Senate Leaders calling for a temporary expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) in the next coronavirus relief package. As the economic effects of COVID-19 are expected to continue into the future, the tax credits would put money back in the pockets of working families as they weather the economic downturn. At a time of deep economic pain and rising income inequality in New Mexico, the improvements supported by Udall and Heinrich would benefit 841,000 New Mexicans, including 368,000 children and 50,000 Native Americans by expanding the EITC and CTC. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
54. Senator Udall joined 21 senators in a letter to Senate leadership to provide emergency assistance to nonprofit museums in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The senators are asking to direct \$2 billion to nonprofit museums through the Institute of Museums and Library Services in the upcoming COVID-19 package. The letter comes in the aftermath of a massive loss in revenue for museums due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a study conducted by the American Alliance of Museums, museums are losing \$33 million a day due to COVID-19 related closures. These closures are impacting workers, as museums employ 726,000 workers nationally. In [New Mexico](#), the museum sector employs nearly 5,000 people and contributes almost \$300 million to the state's GDP. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
55. Senator Udall joined a bipartisan letter to the President of Amtrak opposing plans to terminate one out of every five employees, putting thousands out of work, and reducing the hours of operation of the National Network that includes the long-distance passenger rail route of the Southwest Chief. In New Mexico, the Southwest Chief serves several communities, including Raton, Las Vegas, Lamy, Albuquerque, and Gallup. The senators stressed the need to protect New Mexico jobs and surrounding local economies. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
56. Senator Udall, U.S. Representative Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.) and U.S. Senator Tina Smith (D-Minn.) led a group of 40 lawmakers in a letter demanding answers from the U.S. Department of Agriculture after the agency diverted funds from a critical program supporting New Mexico farmers and ranchers who are trying to keep their farms and livelihoods afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program has served as the only Farm Bill program dedicated to addressing the needs of minority farmers. USDA recently diverted the congressionally-appropriated funds for Section 2501 in July without explanation or consultation with Congress and stakeholder groups. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).

## **Environmental Protection**

57. Senator Udall sent a letter to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Andrew Wheeler, asking detailed oversight questions about how the agency is adjusting its operations in light of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) while continuing its critical mission to protect human health and the environment. The senators also noted concerns with EPA's recently released COVID-19 enforcement discretion policy and asked the agency to commit to publishing promptly on its website the details of any enforcement waivers it issues, asked EPA to commit to extend all rulemaking comment periods and to revise public meeting processes following its refusal to do so for the review of its controversial risk evaluation of the toxic chemical trichloroethylene, and expressed concern that, "EPA is rushing to finalize many of its more controversial rules to weaken pollution standards" in "a deregulatory atmosphere" that EPA employees describe as "relentless." More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).



Senator Udall later sent a letter with Senators Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) to the U.S. Secretary of the Department of Interior, David Bernhardt, urging him to immediately suspend any policy proposals or actions unrelated to the COVID-19 emergency that require a public comment period until the threats of COVID-19 have subsided. The senators sent the letter as New Mexicans and Americans across the country are focused on the safety and well-being of themselves and their families during this global crisis, meaning public comment periods on policy actions at this time cannot fully reflect public opinion and meaningful participation. In New Mexico, DOI oversees approximately 27 million acres, about 34 percent of the state's total lands. Just last week, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), an agency within DOI, entered into a public comment period for the sale of federal public land in Eddy, Lea and Chaves counties while COVID-19 confirmed cases have jumped to 403 with 7 confirmed deaths across the state. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).

58. Senator Udall, in his capacity as ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, led a bipartisan push with Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee and the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior and Senator Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), ranking member of the Senate ENR Committee in a bipartisan letter to Vice President Mike Pence urging the White House Coronavirus Task Force to assist the nation's firefighters and national law enforcement in procuring Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 testing as wildfire season approaches. Udall joined the letter as the National Weather Service in Albuquerque warned of critical fire conditions for the central and northern regions of New Mexico, as current high temperatures, low humidity and high winds increase the risk of wildfires. As the state and the West prepare for wildfire season, firefighters have expressed concern about access to PPE and testing necessary to protect themselves during the COVID-19 pandemic. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
59. Senator Udall led seven of his colleagues in a letter to Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt opposing the Department of Interior's plan to expedite action to relieve oil and gas companies of their obligations to pay royalties owed to American taxpayers that provide fundamental resources for state government budgets. The senators' letter notes that the move is unlikely to preserve jobs in the industry, which are already being lost at a rapid rate, but would rather reward top executives and other large bond and shareholders, while gutting the budgets of state governments across the West that depend on receiving 48 percent of oil and gas royalties from production on public land to fund essential services. The federal government would bear the loss of revenue from the other 52 percent at a time of soaring budget deficits. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
60. Senator Udall and 10 senators sent a letter to Senate leadership, urging them to include support for outdoor recreation and public land infrastructure jobs in the next COVID-19 relief package. With supply chains stalled, retailers shuttered, parks closed, and trips and travel canceled, the \$778 billion outdoor industry is uniquely impacted by COVID-19 mitigation efforts. According to an analysis of past federal support for the outdoor economy, conservation investments generated 15 to 33 jobs per million dollars and an economic return of \$2.4 for every \$1 invested. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
61. Senator Udall led a letter signed by Senator Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) and U.S. Representatives Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.) and Deb Haaland (D-N.M.), urging the Trump administration to extend the period for public input and delay onsite inspections for the draft Farmington Resource Management Plan Amendment – which includes potentially opening up more areas around Chaco Culture National Historical Park to oil and gas drilling – until the COVID-19 crisis can be contained. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).

## Federal Pandemic Response

62. Senator Udall led a letter, signed by 21 Senate Democrats, calling on the executive branch protect Americans' right to participate in the democratic policy-making process, at a time when millions are worried about their and their loved ones' health, safety and economic security and are unable to fully participate in the public comment process. The senators requested that the White House indefinitely extend existing public comment periods and hearings until the public can safely gather after the dangers of the COVID-19 pandemic have passed. The senators are also requesting that the Trump administration pause new federal rulemaking unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic response during the national emergency. The Trump administration has [proposed and issued](#) a total of 15 federal rules since the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued a Public Health Emergency declaration for COVID-19 on January 31. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
63. Senator Udall joined the entire Senate Democratic caucus in a letter to Vice President Mike Pence, raising serious concerns about the Trump administration's lack of transparency and reliance on private companies to distribute desperately needed medical supplies during the Coronavirus pandemic. This practice raises serious questions about the use of taxpayer dollars, the government authorities delegated to private companies, and if their involvement could result in supplies not being delivered to the areas that need it most. Without sufficient oversight, the senators expressed concerns that the administration's strategy for distributing medical supplies is vulnerable to waste, fraud, and abuse. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
64. Senator Udall and the entire New Mexico congressional delegation sent an oversight letter to the U.S. Treasury Department and the Small Business Administration (SBA) regarding the implementation of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) process in New Mexico. The delegation is urging Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and SBA Administrator Jovita Carranza to improve the guidance for these programs so that struggling small businesses and nonprofits in New Mexico can receive desperately needed federal assistance and support. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
65. Senator Udall and along with 44 Senate Democrats, called on the Trump administration to suspend needless bureaucratic restrictions on how governors can distribute Coronavirus Relief Funds to their state. In a letter to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, the senators called on him to revise initial guidelines so that they can provide essential public services amidst the COVID-19 global pandemic, as the law intends. Under the CARES Act, states may use the federal funding for costs related to the COVID-19 public health emergency incurred between March 1 and December 30, 2020. This federal funding is provided to relieve pressure on state budgets and meant to ensure they can maintain public services. If the Trump administration insists on imposing its overly restrictive interpretation of the law, it could severely limit states' abilities to respond and recover, forcing states and communities to cut public services, and lead to layoffs of public employees on the front lines of COVID-19 response. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
66. Senator Udall and other Senate Democratic Committee leaders sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), urging him to focus the Senate on COVID-19-related legislation and oversight as the nation responds to the global pandemic and economic consequences. The Senate is scheduled to convene on May 4. Despite the severity of the COVID-19 public health and economic emergencies, Senator McConnell has not scheduled any related legislative or committee business. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
67. Senator Udall joined 19 Senate Democrats in a letter to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar to express his concern regarding reports of political influence at HHS, demand more information on staffing issues related to the COVID-19 response efforts, and ask whether staff turmoil and turnover is hindering HHS' work. The senators' letter follows reports about the removal of Dr. Rick Bright as Director of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development

Authority (BARDA) earlier this month after Dr. Bright reportedly questioned the Trump administration's public promotion of untested and unproven treatments for the novel coronavirus. The letter also cited several occasions where senior health officials were contradicted or limited from conveying information to the public. These instances seem to indicate a troubling trend where senior officials are forced to choose between letting political concerns or objective science drive the administration's COVID-19 response. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).

68. Senator Udall joined 45 Senate Democrats in a letter to Vice President Mike Pence and the Coronavirus Task Force, as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), urging them to publicize a comprehensive and transparent plan to conduct a national inventory of the coronavirus (COVID-19) diagnostic testing supply, publicly release data on testing results, and provide a detailed plan and timeline for addressing future shortages and gaps in the testing supply chain. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
69. Senator Udall led a group of 30 senators in a letter to U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin, urging him to reject politically motivated conditions on financial relief for the U.S. Postal Service (USPS), which is a critical lifeline for many Americans, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The senators also expressed their strong opposition to the use of coronavirus as a pretext to pursue privatization of USPS. The senators' letter comes as the Treasury Department considers a \$10 billion loan to support the USPS, which continues to see mail traffic, and thus revenue, drop immensely during this COVID-19 pandemic. President Trump recently publicly threatened he will not approve the loan unless the USPS exorbitantly raises package rates, in what appears to be a thinly-veiled attempt at retaliation against the president's perceived critics. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
70. Senator Udall joined all Senate Democrats in introducing a Senate resolution condemning the Trump administration's "reckless" effort to dismantle the Affordable Care Act (ACA) during the COVID-19 public health emergency. The Trump Department of Justice (DOJ) just last week filed a Supreme Court brief arguing the entire law should be struck down. The resolution demands that the DOJ defend the lifesaving law in court. If the ACA is repealed, New Mexicans who have pre-existing conditions could once again face insurmountable financial barriers to accessing the health care they need. New Mexico could lose billions of dollars in federal support for health care, causing significant job losses and jeopardizing the viability of New Mexico's rural and Tribal hospitals. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
71. Senator Udall joined a group of 46 Senate Democrats in a letter to Vice President Mike Pence and Coronavirus Task Force Coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx, urging the Trump administration to reverse a new policy requiring hospitals to report data to a new system set up by the Department of Health and Human Services using a private contractor instead of the National Healthcare Safety Network which is run by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and has been in use for over a decade. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
72. Senator Udall joined 46 senators in a bipartisan call for the extension of the statutory deadlines for the delivery of apportionment data and redistricting files following the 2020 Census. In a letter, led by U.S. Senators Brian Schatz (D-Hawai'i) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), to House and Senate Leadership, the senators urged the congressional leaders to include the extension in the upcoming COVID-19 relief package. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
73. Senator Udall and the New Mexico delegation raised concerns in a letter to U.S. Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham, criticizing the Census Bureau's sudden reversal of previous plans to extend its operations in light of the coronavirus pandemic. This reversal, which ends census data collection on September 30, 2020—one month earlier than the previous deadline of October 31—threatens a full, fair, and accurate 2020 Census and jeopardizes critical federal funding for New Mexico. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).

## Immigration

74. Senator Udall wrote a letter to the Acting Directors of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) requesting the Trump administration to reduce mass detention, prioritizing the most vulnerable, who do not pose threats to public safety or national security, to protect public health and the health of detention center employees, New Mexico communities, and migrants and asylum seekers. Udall's letter follows confirmation that 32 detainees, 11 detention facility employees, and 60 ICE employees tested positive for COVID-19 as of April 8. State and federal prisons, following instructions from governors across the country and guidance from the U.S. Department of Justice, have begun releasing vulnerable inmates who do not pose threats to the public, and employing home confinement to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Three ICE detention facilities, Torrance County Detention Facility, Otero County Processing Center and Cibola County Correctional Center, are currently located in New Mexico. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
75. Senator Udall joined 37 Democratic senators in a letter to President Donald Trump urging him to automatically extend existing legal work authorizations for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients and other impacted immigrants. In New Mexico, there are 1,900 DACA recipients working in health care, education, and food service-related jobs according to the Center for American Progress and 382 TPS recipients as of 2019 according to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
76. Senator Udall, along with 27 Senators and 77 Members of the House of Representatives, are urging Congressional leadership to call for an inclusive coronavirus relief package that ensures that urgently-needed coronavirus testing and medical care and other critical lifelines are accessible by all communities, regardless of limited English proficiency or immigration status. In their letter, the lawmakers highlighted the immigrant workers who are on the front lines of the coronavirus response as health care workers, farmworkers, grocery store workers, and other essential service providers. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
77. Senator Udall joined 49 Members of Congress in a letter to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Acting Secretary Chad Wolf urging the release of detained children amid the COVID-19 pandemic. As the number of children in HHS custody infected with COVID-19 continues to increase, the lawmakers stress the need to protect the health and safety of children in U.S. custody. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
78. Senator Udall along with 26 Senate Democrats, is calling on U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos to allow Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students to access Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds secured in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Secretary DeVos recently announced that the U.S. Department of Education will restrict eligibility for the emergency financial aid based on a student's citizenship status. In the letter, the senators explained that the higher education grant funding is meant for college students experiencing financial hardship due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, including DACA recipients. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
79. Senator Udall led a group of 26 Democratic senators in calling for the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General to conduct a full assessment, including site inspections, of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facilities nationwide to evaluate whether the facilities' operations, management, standards, and conditions have adapted to address the threat of COVID-19 to both the staff and detainees. The letter to U.S. Department of Homeland Security Inspector General Joseph Cuffari cites reports from across the country that staff at ICE's detention facilities with confirmed cases of COVID-19 are working without masks or gloves, detainees are not provided adequate access to hygiene products like soap and sanitizer, and facilities are doing little to accommodate social distancing practices. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).

Senator Udall received a response from Inspector General Cuffari that the office will conduct a review of ICE efforts to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in its facilities. More information on the response to Udall's letter can be found [HERE](#).

80. Senator Udall joined 27 senators in a letter to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), urging the Trump administration to ensure that all ICE detention centers implement the agency's recent commitment to provide 520 free phone call minutes per month for each person in detention during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The letter also calls on DHS to guarantee that any telephonic or remote communication with attorneys remains confidential and unsupervised by detention center staff. The vast majority of those in ICE detention facilities—more than four out of every five—do not have legal representation in their removal cases, which continue to proceed during the pandemic. In order to effectively prepare for their immigration court cases, these detainees must communicate with people outside detention who have access to relevant evidence. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
81. Senator Udall and the New Mexico congressional delegation sent a letter to call on U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to take immediate visa processing actions that will bolster the health care workforce in rural and underserved areas and help fill medical provider shortages in these areas. The lawmakers are calling on USCIS to expedite premium processing efforts for all Form I-129 (Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker) and Form I-140 (Immigrant Petition for Alien Workers) petitions, and to improve existing policies associated with the H-1B and J-1 visa programs. The previous suspension of these efforts likely resulted in further exacerbation of physician shortages in rural and underserved areas which is especially concerning during a public health crisis. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
82. Senator Udall joined 96 Senate and House Democrats in a letter to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), urging the agencies to withdraw new guidance issued by ICE that imperils the status of international students who would be studying online at U.S. institutions this coming academic year. The guidance threatens international students with deportation if they do not comply with the requirement that they take in-person classes. In the letter, the lawmakers expressed deep concerns that ICE's guidance is motivated not by public health considerations, but rather by animus toward non-citizens and immigrants and is a flagrant attempt to hold international students hostage in order to force schools to reopen even as COVID-19 cases are rising. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).
83. Senator Udall joined the New Mexico congressional delegation in a letter raising serious concerns with the Directors of the U.S. Marshals Service, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and CoreCivic, which privately operates the Cibola County Correctional Center, about their shared ability to effectively manage COVID-19 within its facilities following an outbreak that led to hundreds of positive cases. More information on the letter can be found [HERE](#).